

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-7 and 9-10 will be all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1, 7, 9 and 10 have been amended. Claim 8 has been canceled without prejudice.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the at least one lead wire extends through the smaller diameter portion of the elastic seal member. Support for the amendment to claim 1 is found in the specification, for example, at paragraph [0012] and Figs. 1-9.

Independent claim 7 has been amended to incorporate subject matter previously recited in claim 8.

Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form, incorporating subject matter previously recited in claim 7 and claim 9.

Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form, incorporating subject matter previously recited in claim 7 and claim 10.

No new matter is added. Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

I. Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Based on Watanabe

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe (6,178,806) in view of Fujita (2003/0150254).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

(A) Patentability of Amended Claim 1

In response, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the at least one lead wire extends through the smaller diameter portion of the elastic seal member, which feature is not disclosed, illustrated or otherwise suggested by the cited prior art. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted

that claim 1 and claims 3 and 4 depending from claim 1 are patentable over Watanabe in view of Fujita.

(B) Patentability of Independent Claims 6 and 7

Regarding independent Claims 6 and 7, the Examiner contends that claims 6 and 7 merely recite that "a portion of the elastic seal member protrudes outward from a rear end of the tubular metallic member." The Examiner asserts that Fujita's elastic seal member is clearly disposed partly in the rear end of the tubular metallic member (i.e., the protruding portion 13 protrudes outwardly). See Paragraph No. 7, at page 9 of the Action.

The Examiner contends Figure 2 of Fujita only shows the elastic seal member in an uninstalled state, which is not directly relevant to determining whether or not it will protect wires from sharp bending.

Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejection as to claims 6 and 7 for the reasons discussed below.

Claim 6 recites that the crimping step is performed under a condition where a space between the rear end of the tubular metallic member and the outer circumferential surface of the elastic seal member is larger than a space between an inner circumferential surface of a portion to be crimped of the tubular metallic member and the outer circumferential surface of the elastic seal member.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion, the arrangement of Fujita (FIG. 2) does not provide any space between the smaller diameter portion and the tubular metallic member. Particularly, this is because the protruded portion 13 of the seal member is composed between wires 21 and 22.

Accordingly, the subject matter of independent claim 6 is neither taught nor suggested by the combination of Watanabe and Fujita, and independent claim 6 is therefore patentable over Watanabe in view of Fujita.

Amended claim 7 recites that the elastic seal member includes a main body portion disposed inside the tubular metallic member and a smaller diameter portion disposed at the more rear end side than the main body portion and smaller in outer diameter than the main body portion, and that the space is provided between the rear end of the tubular metallic member and the smaller diameter portion.

Watanabe, either alone or in view of Fujita, at least fails to disclose or teach the claimed space provided between the rear end of the tubular metallic member and the smaller diameter portion, as recited in amended independent claim 7. Accordingly, independent claim 7 is patentable over Watanabe in view of Fujita.

(C) Independent claim 9

Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form, incorporating subject matter previously recited in claim 7 and claim 9.

Watanabe, either alone or in view of Fujita, at least fails to disclose or teach that the tubular metallic member includes a fixing portion that fixes the elastic seal member to an inside thereof and a larger diameter portion disposed at the more rear end side than the fixing portion and larger in inner diameter than the fixing portion, and that the space is formed between the larger diameter portion and the elastic seal member, as recited in claim 9. Accordingly, independent claim 9 is patentable over Watanabe in view of Fujita.

(D) Conclusion

In view of the amendment to the claims and the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are patentable over Watanabe in view of Fujita, and withdrawal of the foregoing rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 6-7 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 2, 5 and 10 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Claims 2, 5 and 10 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2 and 5 are still in condition for allowance, at least by virtue of their dependence from claim 1.

Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form, incorporating subject matter previously recited in claim 7 and claim 10.

Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 2, 5 and 10 is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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